



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FISHERIES SERVICE

### Farm-Raised Shellfish Tagging Fact Sheet

- The tagging program assures that the State of Maryland is in compliance with the federal requirements of the Food and Drug Administration's National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) by providing identification and traceability of shellfish harvested from shellfish aquaculture leases and the public fishery.
- Shellfish tagging is the industry standard nationwide. The tagging program will ensure consumer confidence that Maryland shellfish are safe, certified and healthy.
- Tagging regulations require anyone harvesting shellfish from a lease to complete and affix a Farm-Raised Shellfish tag to each container of shellfish, or shellfish stored in bulk before leaving the leased area from which the shellfish were harvested. The regulations can be found in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 08.02.23.04 at:  
<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/getfile.aspx?file=08.02.23.04.htm>
- An amendment to the Department's tagging regulations became effective in 2013 that allows harvesters to use a dealer tag in lieu of a Department-issued tag **IF**:
  - The individual is licensed and certified to sell shellfish by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) in accordance with COMAR 10.15.04 and 10.15.07
  - The dealer tag follows the tagging requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance, incorporated by reference by the DHMH in COMAR 10.15.07.01 **AND** the dealer tag contains the statement "Farm-Raised Shellfish" and has the lease number on it.
  - When using a dealer tag in a harvester capacity, the dealer tag may not be pre-printed with an option for "wild shellfish" because a harvester is prohibited from having both types of tags on board at the same time.
- Tags must remain affixed to the container until the product is in the possession of a Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) certified shellfish dealer.
- Farm-Raised Shellfish tags that are issued to leaseholders by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Aquaculture Division and may not be transferred or reused. Tags printed with the year 2013 cannot be used during the 2014 season and any unused, expired tags must be returned to the Department.
- A harvester may not be in possession of wild shellfish tags and farm-raised shellfish tags on the harvesting vessel at the same time.
- Failure to comply with the State's tagging requirements can result in civil and/or criminal penalties, including the suspension or revocation of a leaseholder's Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit or Registrant Card.